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THE CONDOR

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Western Ornithology

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EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The following individuals, members of the Cooper Club, either now or formerly, are known to the editors of *THE CONDOR* as having entered into military service. There are doubtless others to be added to the list; regarding these we solicit information, to the end that our war service records be kept up to date. We propose to use this column for revised lists from time to time.

Albert L. Barrows, First Lieutenant, Infantry, National Army, Camp Lewis, Washington.

Allan Brooks, Major, Second Army School of Sniping, British Expeditionary Forces in France.

Charles L. Camp, First Lieutenant, Field Artillery, in France.

Edward A. Goldman, Major, Sanitary Corps, National Army.

F. Harvey Holden, Captain, Coast Artillery, National Army.

Remington Kellogg, Engineers (Forest), in France.

Joseph Kittredge, Jr., First Lieutenant, Engineers (Forest), in France.

Charles A. Kofoid, Major, Sanitary Corps, National Army.

Sidney B. Peyton, Machine Gun Company, Camp Kearny, California.

John C. Phillips, Medical Corps, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana.

George W. Schussler, Camp Lewis, American Lake, Washington.

Alfred C. Shelton, Base Hospital, Camp Lewis, American Lake, Washington.

Tracy I. Storer, Base Hospital, Camp Lewis, American Lake, Washington.

Adriaan van Rossem, Camp Lewis, American Lake, Washington.

John P. Young, Captain, Camp Dix, New Jersey.

Those who collect bird-skins would greatly enhance the scientific value of their specimens if they would determine correctly the age of their birds. This is possible with passerine birds, and some others, up to the eighth or tenth month of their age by observation of the condition of the skull. An excellent demonstration of this method is given by Mr. James P. Chapin in his paper on *The Classification of the Weaver-Birds* (Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., vol. 37, 1917, p. 258, fig. 9). Mr. Chapin's paper also serves to show how important it may be in correctly diagnosing species and higher groups to know the effects of age on plumage and dimensions of parts.

Dr. Jonathan Dwight is now putting into final shape for publication a monographic revision of the North American juncos, upon which he has been engaged for some years past. With such a wide diversity of opinions as expressed in the last two authoritative treatments of the genus—Ridgway, in part 1 of his *Birds of North and Middle America*, and the A. O. U. *Check-List*—another careful analysis of the facts, especially if put forth as a special study rather than part of a more general work, will be welcomed by all who have had occasion to puzzle over the variations in this group of birds.

Mr. H. S. Swarth has begun a study of the Fox Sparrows, especially as regards migration and local distribution upon the Pacific Coast. The incentive for this work arose in part from the increasing numbers of specimens being sent to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology for identification. While in this manner a large proportion of the skins in Californian collections has probably come under his inspection, he would welcome the opportunity of examining any additional material now available.

Mr. R. G. Hazard, of Peace Dale, Rhode Island, and latterly of Santa Barbara, California, a life member of the Cooper Club,

died at Santa Barbara on January 23, 1918, after having reached the sixty-third year of his age. Mr. Hazard was well known as an enthusiastic oologist and as a man ever ready to advance the interests of others in this field.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

A STUDY | OF THE | INCUBATION PERIODS |
OF | BIRDS—|WHAT DETERMINES THEIR |
LENGTHS? |—|By | W. H. BERGTOLD, M. D.,
M. Sc. | Member of the American Ornitholo-
gists' Union | The Kendrick-Bellamy Co. |
Denver, Colorado | 1917 (our copy received
June 20, 1917); 8vo, pp. 1-109.

The above title brings to the attention of bird observers a field of observation in which, as the author well states, there is "a lamentable dearth of information". Nevertheless the data finally gathered and here presented is really of astonishing quantity (though not always of acceptable degree of accuracy), and has proven sufficient for the establishment tentatively of several interesting conclusions. Among these are that length of incubation is not directly or closely correlated with either size of the bird, or size of the egg, or size of the yolk, or degree of precocity of the young, or age of the female, or longevity of the species. There is, however, a "true" incubation period (secured by allowing for all factors which serve to prolong the process abnormally) which is constant and characteristic of each species, and this is directly correlated with the body temperature—the higher the temperature the shorter the incubation period. Now, such data as are available seem to show that the lower or more generalized a bird in the phylogenetic scale, the lower its temperature; so that, again, the incubation period allies itself in degree of abbreviation directly with degree of phylogenetic advancement of the species concerned.

The above brief epitome is inadequate to give a fair idea of Bergtold's discussion of the many phases of the subject involved, and we can only recommend that interested readers take the first opportunity to fully apprise themselves of the contents of the book.

Referring again to lack of information, the following are the facts called for by Bergtold, if further enquiries along this and related lines are to be pursued fruitfully: Exact length of incubation period of birds and reptiles; exact length of incubation of birds in polar and tropical regions; the period of viability of birds' eggs; the weights of birds, preferably of the breeding female; the

weights of birds' eggs; the effects of superheating on birds' and reptiles' eggs; the optimum incubation temperatures of birds' and reptiles' eggs; bird temperatures; temperatures under the incubating bird; reptile temperatures; minutiae of bird physiology.

Egg-collectors, skin-collectors, and nature students of the opera-glass contingent are here on common ground in that all are in positions to contribute importantly to the stock of facts needed.—J. GRINNELL.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF BIRD-LIFE IN COLOMBIA; A CONTRIBUTION TO A BIOLOGICAL SURVEY OF SOUTH AMERICA. By FRANK M. CHAPMAN. Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, vol. xxxvi, 1917, pp. i-x, 1-729, 41 plates (some colored), 21 text figs.

The ultimate object of the several years of zoological exploration which the American Museum of Natural History has been prosecuting in South America is, we are told, the discovery of the geographic origin of South American life. As a step toward the attainment of this end the publication here reviewed is devoted to a careful study of the birds of a relatively restricted part of the continent, in their racial variation and geographic distribution—of the "life zones" and "faunal areas", and the species and subspecies inhabiting them. As explanatory of the peculiar interest attached to the study of the birds of Colombia, the chapter devoted to "a review of Colombian ornithology" is briefly descriptive of the "Bogota" collections, productive of so many new species of birds in years gone by, pointing out the value of these collections in the early study of the birds of this region and their absolute uselessness in a present day investigation relative to the distribution of species. Californian ornithologists will be especially able to appreciate the points here made, as to the necessity for absolute accuracy in the labelling of specimens.

The life zones recognized by the author in Colombia are four in number, being, in ascending order, Tropical, Subtropical, Temperate, and Paramo, the last mentioned being a term "locally applied to any treeless region lying above 10,000 feet". Some important conclusions as regards the existing fauna of the region are as follows: That the birds of every zone above the tropics have been derived from a lower level; that the Temperate zone of the Colombian Andes reaches sea level farther south in South America and that its life is derived in part by zonal, in part by latitudinal extension and is